



DECEMBER 24, 2023

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

74-109 Larrea Street

Palm Desert, California 92260

Website: www.go-stgeorge.org

Email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com

Mailing Address:
74-109 Larrea St.
Palm Desert, CA.92260
Tel: (760) 568-9901
or: (760) 880-5869

- Fr. Theodore Pantels,
Proistamenos (Pastor)
- Deacon Euthym
Kontaxis, M.D.

Holy Communion
Order

- 1. Please remain standing while following the directions of our ushers.
2. Ladies, kindly remove lipstick before receiving.
3. When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name), and naturally receive as if being fed.
4. Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
5. All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see the priest if you have any questions.

THE LADDER
THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST OUR GOD



PRAYER FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES

Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all these things that are pleasing to You. For You are the Light of our souls and bodies and to You we give glory together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

EPISTLE - Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

GOSPEL- St. Matthew 1:1-25

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Ammin'adab, and Ammin'adab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Bo'az by Rahab, and Bo'az the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uri'ah, and Solomon the father of Rehobo'am, and Rehobo'am the father of Abi'jah, and Abi'jah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehosh'aphat, and Jehosh'aphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzzi'ah, and Uzzi'ah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezeki'ah, and Hezeki'ah the father of Manas'seh, and Manas'seh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josi'ah, and Josi'ah the father of Jechoni'ah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoni'ah was the father of Sheal'tiel, and Sheal'tiel the father of Zerub'babel, and Zerub'babel the father of Abi'ud, and Abi'ud the father of Eli'akim, and Eli'akim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and

Continued on the next page -->

GOSPEL, Continued

Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eli'ud, and Eli'ud the father of Elea'zar, and Elea'zar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a

just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Liturgical Notes for Today

At the Entrance of the Gospel: 1) **Entrance hymn:** 1) *"The women disciples of the Lord heard from the angel the joyful news of the Resurrection and the repeal of the sentence imposed upon our forefathers. With pride, they said to the Apostles, 'Death is vanquished; Christ our God is risen, bestowing upon the world His great mercy.'"*/Το φαιδρὸν...

2) *"At that time, Mary, bearing the Immaculate Conception, registered for the census in Bethlehem with Joseph the elder, of the seed of David. The birthing time arrived and there was no room at the inn. But the cave proved to be a magnificent palace for the Queen. Christ is born and shall restore the fallen image."*/Ἀπεγράφετο ποτέ...

3) *"Great are the accomplishments of faith. In the fountain of flame, the three Holy Youths rejoiced as though they were resting by the waters. And the Prophet Daniel showed himself to be a shepherd to the lions, as though they were sheep. Through their prayers, O Christ our God, save our souls."*/Μεγάλα τα της πίστεως...

4) *"Since you are a deliverer of captives..."* [Hymn of St. George]/Ὡς τῶν αιχμαλώτων ελευθερωτῆς...

5) **Kontakion:** *"Today the Virgin comes to the cave to ineffably give birth to the eternal Logos. Harkening to this, rejoice, O Universe, and with the angels and shepherds glorify Him, the God before all ages, Who willed to be held as a young child."*/Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον...

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Nicholas Cabasilas, in his classic book, *The Life in Christ*, explains that Christ is the Image of each of us in as much as we were created according to His Image and Likeness. Cabasilas notes, *"We must regard Christ as the Archetype of the former Adam created from Him."* (pg. 191). Gentleness, compassion and glory to God, are the virtues that describe the Person of Christ and, by extension, they are virtues that we are able to personify in our own character, due to the gifts with which God created us. Christ renews our spiritual powers: *"It was not the old Adam who was the model for the New; but the New Adam was generated...because of the corruption which the old Adam initiated. (Romans 8:3)."* (pg.190).

The image of the Star of Bethlehem is before us during the Divine Liturgy as we celebrate our Savior's Nativity, especially when we chant the Apolytikion: *"Your Nativity, [i.e., Your birth into the world] O Christ our God, has caused the light of knowledge to rise upon the world. For therein worshippers of the stars were by a star instructed to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness and to know You as Orient on high. Glory to You, O Lord."* The Star is a vehicle for the Holy Spirit to enlighten the world, revealing that Christ is the only True God. As did the Wise Men, we now confess that Christ is God with these words: *"We venerate Your Cross, O Christ, and Your Holy Resurrection we praise and glorify; for, You are*

Continued on the next page -->

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM, Continued

our God; we know no other." The presence of the Star in the heavens reminds us that all of humanity is called to worship Christ. The Wise Men and the shepherds represent people from all walks of life. Christ is our God for all people at all times and in all places.

Through the Star of Bethlehem, we are all enlightened with the Love of God. Christ our God now enters our lives, looking at us; seeing inside us; watching over us, because He loves us, and values us tremendously. He wants each of us to be with Him in His Everlasting Kingdom. +FR. THEODORE

Ο Νικόλαος ο Καβάσλας, στο κλασικό του βιβλίο, *Η εν Χριστώ Ζωή*, εξηγεί ότι ο Χριστός είναι η Εικόνα του καθενός μας στο βαθμό που εδημιουργηθήκαμε κατά την Εικόνα και την Ομοίωσίν Του. Σημειώνει: «Πρέπει να θεωρούμε τον Χριστό ως το Αρχέτυπο του πρώην Αδάμ που εδημιουργήθηκε από Αυτόν». (σελ. 191). Η πραότητα, η ευσπλαχνία και η δόξα στον Θεό, είναι οι αρετές που περιγράφουν το Πρόσωπο του Χριστού και, κατ' επέκταση, είναι αρετές που μπορούμε να προσωποποιήσουμε στον χαρακτήρα μας, λόγω ότι έχουμε στη φύση μας πνευματικές δυνάμεις που μας χαρίζει ο Δημιουργός μας. Ο Χριστός ανανεώνει τις πνευματικές δυνάμεις μας: "Ήταν ο Νέος Αδάμ που ήλθε στον κόσμο εξαιτίας της διαφθοράς του παλιού Αδάμ." (Ρωμαίους 8:3, σελ.190).

Το σημείο του Αστéρος της Βηθλεέμ είναι μπροστά μας κατά τη διάρκεια της Θείας Λειτουργίας, ειδικώς, όταν ψάλλουμε το Απολυτίκιον: «*Η Γέννησίς Σου, [δηλαδή η γέννησή Σου στον κόσμο] Χριστέ ο Θεός ημών, ανέτειλε τω κόσμω τω φως τω της γνώσεως εν αυτή γαρ οι τοις άστροις λατρεύοντες, υπό αστέρος εδιδάσκοντο. Σε προσκυνείν, τον Ήλιον της δικαιοσύνης, και Σε γινώσκειν εξ ύψους ανατολήν, Κύριε δόξα Σοι.*» Ο αστήρ είναι ένα μέσον διά του οποίου το Άγιο Πνεύμα εφώτισε τον κόσμο, αποκαλύπτοντας ότι ο Χριστός είναι ο μόνος Αληθινός Θεός. Όπως και οι Μάγοι έκαναν τότε, εμείς σήμερα ομολογούμε ότι ο Χριστός είναι Θεός καθώς προσευχόμεθα: «*Ανάστασιν Χριστού θεασάμενοι, προσκυνήσουμεν άγιον, Κύριον Ιησούν, τον μόνον ανμάρτητον. Τον Σταυρόν Σου Χριστέ προσκυνούμεν και την αγίαν Σου Ανάστασιν υμνούμεν και δοξάζομεν...*». Η παρουσία του Αστéρος εις τους ουρανούς μας διδάσκει ότι όλη η ανθρωπότης καλείται να προσκυνήσει τον Χριστόν. Οι Μάγοι και οι βοσκοί αντιπροσωπεύουν ανθρώπους όλων της κάθε καταστάσεως της ζωής. Ο Χριστός είναι Θεός για όλους τους ανθρώπους σε όλες τις εποχές και σε όλους τους τόπους.

Διά μέσου του Αστéρος της Βηθλεέμ, όλοι φωτιζόμεθα με την Αγάπη του Θεού. Ο Χριστός σήμερα εισέρχεται στις ψυχές μας. Μας βλέπει, μας κοιτάζει και μας διαφυλάγει, επιδή μας αγαπά – και, λόγω της τεράστιας αξίας που μας έχει δώσει, θέλει όλους μας να είμεθα μαζί Του στην Αιώνιον Βασιλείαν Του. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, December 25th.....**THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, December 26th.....No Bible Study

Wednesday, December 27th.....**ST. STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR**
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Note: No online Orthodox Christian Catechism Class this week.

Looking ahead:....

Monday, January 1st.....**CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST & COMMEMORATION OF ST. BASIL**
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great – 9:30 a.m.

Friday, January 5th.....**FOREFEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) OF CHRIST**
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great-9:30 a.m./Great Blessing of the Waters to follow.

Saturday, January 6th.....**EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) OF CHRIST**
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./Great Blessing of the Waters to follow.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PHILOPTOCHOS –

- o In the past two weeks, our **Ladies Philoptochos Chapter** has made donations to **SafeHouse of the Desert, Birth Choice of the Desert, Coachella Valley Rescue Mission, and the Narrow Door**, in addition to making & delivering **twenty-eight Holiday Baskets** for the shut-ins in our community. We thank everyone who participated in and supported this effort!
 - o This Sunday, we still have a little bit of Greek pastries left for sale, including koulouakia, baklava, kourembiethes, & melamakarona, however, we are sold out of sweet bread.
 - o **Vasliopita Sunday is January 7th** and we will have a limited amount of vasilopita available for purchase on that day.
 - o January calendar...Philoptochos Board meeting, Monday, January 8th @ 11:00 AM.
Philoptochos General Meeting, Monday, January 15th @ 11:30 AM
 - o **Paint & Sip** is back for January! If you enjoyed the wine bottle painting in November, then you will enjoy painting a Greek vase at our next event on **Sunday, January 21st!** (See flier for details)
 - o Our St. George Philoptochos made both a monetary donation and a no-sew blanket donation to the local non-profit "Birth Choice of the Desert." Since August 2023, the "Birth Choice" organization was able to save nine babies from abortion, since their mothers, who took the first of two abortion pills immediately regretted their decision and repented in time for their babies to be born. **Enclosed is a flyer announcing a screening about the work of Birth Choice of the Desert in saving the lives of pre-born children**, which will be shown at **Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church** in Palm Desert on **January 12, 2024**.
- **SUNDAY SCHOOL** – Sunday School classes will held on **Sunday, January 14, 2024** and **Sunday, January 28, 2024**. A special Sunday School service project is scheduled for Sunday, January 28th.
- **ONLINE ORTHODOX CATECHISM CLASS** - The class will not meet this week. It will resume on **Wednesday, January 3, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.** Those who want may email Fr. Ted at pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com to receive a link in order to join the online class.
- **GREEK FESTIVAL** – Volunteers, sponsors and donors in support of our 2024 Greek Festival (February 17-18, 2024) are most welcome! Festival flyers are available in our parish hall for distribution throughout the Coachella Valley. **Festival preparations resume on Monday, January 8th.** See enclosed flyer, "Support our Festival." Note: The next Festival Meeting is: Wednesday, January 4, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.
- **ST. GEORGE BOOKSTORE** – Our **St. George Bookstore** has received many new items just in time for Christmas party gift swaps and/or last minute gift ideas for your special someone. We have set up a "**Christmas Shop**" in the **Church Hall**. Items include novelty aprons, Greek flag fleece blankets, pashmina shawls, orthodox jewelry, handmade soaps, ornaments, and much more. Another shipment is arriving by mid-week so if you don't see anything today check back in a few days or next Sunday. We take credit card, cash, or **checks payable to St. George Church -memo-bookstore**.



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 350/2023

Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of Christmas

December 25, 2023

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Thus says the Lord: a rod shall come forth out of the root of Jesse,
and a blossom shall rise from that root.
(Prophecy of Isaiah 11:1)

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

Although He comes to us in humility, in swaddling clothes and in poverty, He is the powerful Rod of the Root of Jesse. In assuming our human nature from his Most Holy Mother the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, He bears all the suffering and sin of humanity across all the ages. What strength in this Rod! What glory in His powerful love for every creature!

He also comes as a blossom of inner and truthful beauty, to restore our human nature to its original shining loveliness. The Prophet Isaiah says elsewhere, *"He had no beauty nor glory..."* (53:2), but such was the humility that bowed down the Son of God to become the Son of Man. The flower of His virtues, His sinless life, His sacrificial love, is a bloom that will never fade. The root of His human nature is his Holy Mother, who bore him in a cave in Bethlehem of Judea. But from this root out of dry and virginal ground, there arose the first fruits of them that slept (I Corinthians 15:20)! For the Lord was born in cave in order to arise from another cave. He was wrapped as an infant in swaddling clothes in order to proclaim His own Resurrection by leaving behind the grave-linens set aside in the tomb (John 20:5). And He was laid in a manger — used to feed the mute beasts of burden — so that we might be fed with His Holy Body and Precious Blood and proclaim Him risen from the dead.

Therefore, my beloved Christians, let us receive this Rod of glory and Blossom of beauty with gratitude and honor. Through his Holy Mother, His human nature is our human nature, and there is nothing that He cannot make whole and pure. Let us worship Him with all our hearts, and minds, and souls.

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America



Support our Festival!

Our festival is just a few months away and, God willing, everyone will have a rewarding experience. We thank our parishioners and friends for your past support and want to take a moment to remind you of all the ways you can help this upcoming year.

Volunteering – Volunteers are welcome as of the 18th of December for cooking. Such support will be needed up until the festival in February. Please reach out to George or Stacy Argyros to get more information. In addition, assistance is appreciated during the week before the festival to help set up, during the festival and following the festival to assist with cleanup. If you’ve volunteered before and wish to continue, feel free to contact the past chairperson to again offer your assistance. If you’d like to volunteer for the first time or don’t have contact information for the past chairperson, feel free to reach out to Jim Christopoulos at 760-902-8460 or at goofy_328@yahoo.com.

Sponsorships – Any person can pay for a sponsorship, whether it be to advertise your business or send a personal message. You may also ask friends and/or owners of businesses you frequent to buy a sponsorship. These not only provide financial support for the festival, but are a wonderful way to advertise businesses.

Donations – Unable to volunteer? Sponsorship not appropriate? Another option would be to provide a cash donation. Such a donation would help offset our many expenses.

The success of our festival depends on us all. We strive to simultaneously satisfy the needs of our guests as well as to share our hospitality and religion with them. Please help in any way you can. You may contact George Argyros or Father Ted for more information.

WE INVITE YOU TO OUR

Paint & Sip

Sunday

01/21/2024 @ 1200 p.m.



HOSTED BY:

St George Ladies Philoptochos

74109 Larrea St – Palm Desert, CA 92260

Bring your friends and join us for an afternoon of appetizers, refreshments, wine and painting a beautiful small Grecian vase!

Sign up during Coffee Hour or call
St. George Church @ 760-568-9901

\$15

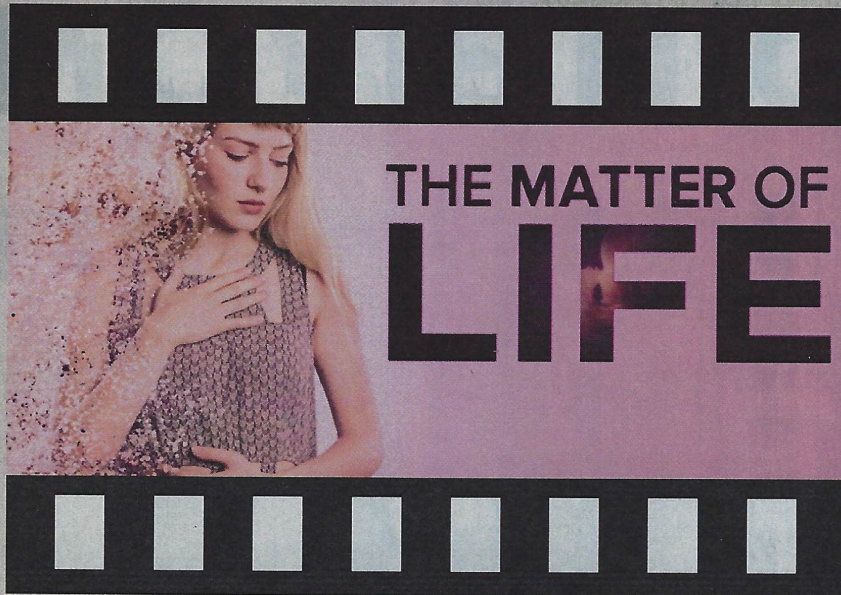
PER PERSON

Check out our talented and fun group from our first Paint & Sip Art Event on 11/12/2023. A great time was had by all!



Community

MOVIE NIGHT



A film that clarifies the most contentious issue of our day.

JANUARY 12

DOORS OPEN 5:30PM • STARTS AT 6:00PM

FREE ADMISSION!

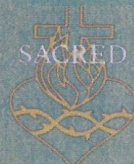
SACRED HEART CHURCH

SALTA PASTORAL CENTER GYM

43775 DEEP CANYON RD, PALM DESERT, CA 92260

PRESENTED BY:

**BIRTH
CHOICE**
OF THE DESERT



SACRED HEART CHURCH
Pro-Life Ministry



